



## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **Rural Utilities Service**

#### **Information Collection Activity; Comment Request**

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), invites comments on this information collection for which approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will be requested.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Michele Brooks, Team Lead, Rural Development Innovation Center- Regulatory Team, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1522, Room 5162 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 690-1078. E-mail: [Michele.Brooks@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:Michele.Brooks@wdc.usda.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies an information collection that will be submitted to OMB for approval.

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: Michele Brooks, Team Lead, Rural Development Innovation Center - Regulatory Team, USDA, STOP 1522, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1522. E-mail: Michele.Brooks@wdc.usda.gov.

**Title:** 7 CFR Part 1738, Rural Broadband Loans and Loan Guarantee Program.

**OMB Control Number:** 0572-0130.

**Type of Request:** Revision of a currently approved information collection.

**Abstract:** The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), is authorized by Title VI, Rural Broadband Access, of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, as amended (RE Act), to provide loans and loan guarantees to fund the cost of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment for the provision of

broadband service in eligible rural areas in the States and Territories of the United States. 7 CFR part 1738 prescribes the types of loans available, facilities financed, and eligible applicants, as well as minimum equity requirements to be considered for a loan. In addition, 7 CFR part 1738 outlines the process through which RUS will consider applicants under the priority consideration required in Title VI.

The term of the loan is based on the expected composite economic life based on the depreciation rates of the facilities financed. The term of the loan can be as high as 35 years. These loans are secured by a first lien on the borrower's broadband system. In the interest of protecting loan security and accomplishing the statutory objective of a sound program of rural broadband service access, Title VI of the RE Act further requires that RUS make or guarantee a loan only if there is reasonable assurance that the loan, together with all outstanding loans and obligations of the borrower, will be repaid in full within the time agreed.

**Estimate of Burden:** Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated as 100 hours per response.

**Estimated Number of Respondents:** 18.

**Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:** 4.5.

**Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:** 7,305 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from MaryPat Daskal, Rural Development Innovation Center-Regulatory Team, at (202) 720-7853. E-mail: MaryPat.Daskal@wdc.usda.gov. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: August 14, 2018.

Kenneth L. Johnson  
Administrator, Rural Utilities Service  
[FR Doc. 2018-17986 Filed: 8/21/2018 8:45 am; Publication Date: 8/22/2018]